

April 27, 2012

REVISED

To: Executive Board

Subject: **Access Personal Care Assistant Fares**

Recommendation

Receive and file a report related to charging fares to Access Customers' Personal Care Assistants.

Analysis

In 2001, Foothill Transit entered into a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with Access Services Inc. (Access) and joined the Access Free Fare program. The program was implemented to reduce the countywide cost of transporting customers eligible for paratransit transportation by allowing holders of an Access card to ride fixed-route transit systems free of charge. Currently if an Access customer's card indicates that they are allowed to have a Personal Care Assistant (PCA), the fare for that individual is included in the reimbursement from Access.

The MOU between Foothill Transit and Access provided for a flat fee monthly reimbursement from Access to Foothill Transit. That fee was a nominal fee of \$212 per month based on the usage of the Foothill Transit system as tracked manually by coach operators on Foothill Transit's fare collection system at the time. It was provided that Foothill Transit and Access would review the success of this program and adjust the compensation accordingly.

Now that both Foothill Transit and Access have implemented the countywide Transit Access Pass (TAP) system, much more accurate data collection is possible and the usage statistics show a significantly higher and steadily increasing number of trips on Foothill Transit by Access customers and PCAs combined. In light of the more accurate ridership data available, a new reimbursement agreement is being negotiated.

In recent months reported cases of abuse of our current practice that allows PCAs to ride free of charge have increased. The issue at hand is that a customer can designate any individual as their PCA on any given day. Several incidents have been reported where an Access rider and PCA board at the same location and disembark at different locations; individuals are offered free rides by Access customers; Access cardholders "sell" PCA rides to individuals for less than the regular fixed-route fare.

Currently, not all of Access' Free Fare partners are reimbursed in a manner similar to our current flat-fee arrangement and several of Access' Free Fare partners have requested that Access reimburse fixed-route operators for rides taken by PCAs. The

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Access board is scheduled to consider the following policy that would take effect on July 1, 2012:

Access would only be obligated to reimburse Free Fare partners for trips taken by an Access customer with a valid ID card.

This Access policy will eliminate any reimbursement for rides taken by PCAs. Accordingly, Foothill Transit's existing regular fares will have to be paid personally by PCAs riding after that date since those fares will no longer be reimbursed by Access. Foothill Transit will continue to be reimbursed for rides taken by Access' actual customers based on a formula to be determined in the new reimbursement agreement currently being negotiated.

Budget Impact

While Foothill Transit's farebox configuration does not distinguish between rides taken by Access customers and those taken by PCAs, a very conservative approach would be to assume that ten percent of Access cardholders legitimately use PCAs on their fixed route trips on our system. At that rate, approximately 3,000 legitimate rides per month would be taken by PCAs on Foothill Transit service. At an average fare of \$1.29 per boarding, that equates to \$3,870 per month.

Sincerely,



Kevin McDonald
Deputy Executive Director



Doran J. Barnes
Executive Director